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AUTHOR Guglielmino, Lucy M.
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ABSTRACT

In spite of the availability of vocational classes, many barriers still stand in the way of the low-income or unemployed single parent who would like to take advantage of this training. Problems include child care, transportation, and tuition cost. The Vocational Education Support Program for Single Parents and Homemakers at Lindsey-Hopkins Technical Education Center in Miami, Florida, addresses all of these barriers and provides other support services as well. Referral to the program is through school guidance counselors and community agencies. Based on referrals from these agencies and one public service radio spot, the program has served more than 140 single parents or homemakers during its first 5 months. The typical client is a black female between 18 and 24 years old with two preschool children, typically supported by Aid for Families with Dependent Children. The program components include referral or recruitment, intake/interview and testing, discussion of available training, a second interview that includes sign-up for needed services and referral to a counselor, participation in self-esteem and employability skills workshops, monitoring progress of participants, preparing them for job interviews, and follow-up. Although the program is too new for clients to have entered employment, clients seem eager to learn new skills and to apply them. (KC)

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The Lindsey Hopkins Vocational Education Support Program for Single Parents and Homemakers

by

Dr. Lucy M. Guglielmino
Vocational Education Single Parent Program Support Project
Funded under the Carl Perkins Act

Florida Atlantic University
1986

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In 1983 Liberty City and the Culmer-Overton area of Miami were torn by riots sparked by the shooting of a Black man by a Hispanic policeman. To the eyesores of abandoned cars and and furniture, broken windows and battered buildings were added the scars of fire and vandalism. These Black, low-income areas lie just blocks away from prestigious Biscayne Boulevard and the luxurious, ultra-modern office buildings overlooking Biscayne Bay. Store windows are barred or have metal awnings which are religiously pulled down over the glass and padlocked each night. A significant percentage of the more than 50,000 families in Dade County who are at or below the poverty level live within the confines of Liberty City.

Confronted daily with the stark contrast between their existence and the glitter and polish of multimillion-dollar financial centers and ultra-chic, ultra- expensive restaurants and shops, many of them have stopped trying or even hoping to better themselves. Many others, born into welfare families, have never visualized themselves living differently. The Lindsey Hopkins Technical Education Center lies within the Culmer-Overtown area and adjacent to Liberty City. Once a student ventures inside, a new world opens up. Vocational classes, offering a path out of poverty to gainful employment or more highly paid employment are offered in 100 different areas.

In spite of the availability of classes, many barriers still stand in the way of the low-income or unemployed single parent who would like to take advantage of this

training. Childcare is a major problem. How can an unemployed individual pay for childcare while receiving training? Transportation is another factor. Gas or bus fare costs dollars that the unemployed individual does not have. A third barrier is tuition cost. The choice of spending sparse dollars for food, clothing, medical care, insurance, or tuition is a difficult one. The Vocational Education Support Program for Single Parents and Homemakers at Lindsey-Hopkins addresses all of these barriers and provides other support services as well. The program

REFERRAL AND RECRUITMENT

The program obviously meets a deeply-felt need, since the personnel report that they have had little time to do outreach. Once they contacted the school guidance counselors and a few community agencies, word of the program's availability spread quickly. Program personnel now regularly receive referrals from the State Employment Service, Health and Rehabilitative Services office, Catholic Social Services, food stamp office, WIN, and the City of Miami Overtown Jobs Project as well as from the school guidance counselors. Based on referrals from these agencies and one radio spot aired as a public service, the program has served more than 140 single parents or homemakers during a five-month period.

INTAKE INTERVIEW

During an initial interview, potential program participants are led to discuss their goals, made aware of the programs available, and provided with some information

Lindsey-Hopkins
Vocational Education Support Program
for
Single Parents and Homemakers

REFERRAL OR RECRUITMENT

INTAKE INTERVIEW/TESTING

1. Discussion of goals
2. Discussion of available support services
   a. child care
   b. bus passes
   c. uniforms
   d. books/supplies
   e. tuition waiver
3. Discussion of available training programs/nontraditional counseling
4. Testing (basic reading and math)

SECOND INTERVIEW

1. Test score review and discussion (possible referral)
2. Selection of vocational program
3. Completion of form verifying eligibility for support services
4. Completion of fee waiver, if applicable
5. Sign-up for needed support services
6. Refferal to counselor or department head for schedule and registration

SELF-ESTEEM AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS WORKSHOPS

MONITORING PROGRESS

PREPARATION FOR JOB INTERVIEWS

FOLLOW-UP

and counseling on nontraditional careers. They are made aware of the support services available through the project and initial information pertaining to their eligibility for these services is requested. Those who can demonstrate need are eligible for free child care, bus passes, books and supplies as well as a waiver of tuition fees. Potential participants are also tested on basic reading and math skills.

SECOND INTERVIEW

Feedback on the test scores is provided during a second interview. If scores are too low to permit immediate entry into a vocational program, the client is referred to an Individualized Manpower Training System (IMTS) laboratory within the vocational center for remedial instruction. If scores are acceptable, the client then indicates the vocational program he or she has chosen. Clients are asked to provide necessary documentation verifying their need so that copies can be placed in their files and required forms for fee waivers can be completed. Arrangements are then made for any of the other financial support services which are necessary. Child care is provided on-site for most parents through cooperation with the Child Guidance, Care, and Management training program offered at Lindsey-Hopkins. The student laboratory is a licensed day care center housing 75 children. Through a State Food and Nutrition contract, breakfast and lunch are provided for children from eligible families. When children cannot be

accomodated on-site, arrangements are made with other local child-care providers. Uniforms, books, and supplies required for classes are provided, with the understanding that non-consumable items will be returned at the end of the program. Other critical needs which cannot be met through the single parent program are addressed through referrals. Common agencies to which clients are referred include the Housing Authority, Salvation Army, Jewish Family Services, the Jackson Memorial Hospital Clinic for Indigent Patients, and a free dental clinic which operates on campus. The single parent or homemaker is then referred to a counselor or department head for scheduling and registration.

The list of vocational programs selected by the clients indicates that the orientation to nontraditional occupations is having an impact. Clients have chosen training in the following fields:

printing,
electronics,
nursing,
business education/legal secretary/word processing,
computer programming/data entry,
nutrition and dietetic services,
food management,
cosmetology,
apparel design/manufacturing,
accounting,
massage,
electronics and motor winding,
drafting, and
dental technician training.

SELF-ESTEEM AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS WORKSHOPS

Either before attending any vocational classes (for those who register in the middle of a term) or during lunch

hours, clients receive training designed to increase self-esteem and develop employability skills. Sessions are included on such topics as self-awareness and self-esteem, grooming and personal hygiene, positive parenting, handling separation from your child, and interview skills. Positive single parent role models are asked to speak, and motivational films such as "Pack Your Own Chute" are shown. Employability skills are also covered within the context of each class.

MONITORING PROGRESS

Program personnel request a monthly progress report on each client from classroom instructors. Although easily and quickly completed, it provides the single parent personnel with very specific information on regularity of attendance, levels of progress, degree of coooperation, personal appearance, work habits, and difficulties. A space for the instructor's comments is also provided. Any problems mentioned on the teacher's report form are addressed through informal counseling sessions with the client. A copy of the report from constitutes Appendix A.

PREPARATION FOR JOB INTERVIEWS

When clients approach the end of their programs, they are asked to prepare a resume and meet with the educational specialist. They receive assistance with polishing the resume as well as information on currently available jobs, interview skills, and appropriate dress for the interview.

FOLLOW-UP

Information to facilitate follow-up has been built into

the intake form. Clients are asked on that form to give names of their closest relative, their closest relative in the local area, and a local contact other than a relative. This information will make follow-up easier if the clients have moved. The usual vocational education follow-up form will also be used to gain information on placement and continued employment.

The typical program client is a Black female between 18 and 24 years of age with two pre-school children. The children are typically supported through Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Although the program is too young to have any clients already entering employment, program personnel report an eagerness to gain new skills and apply them. The program makes it possible for previously unemployed or underemployed single parents to make a new start in life and become financially independent.

For additional information about the Vocational Education Support Program for Single Parents and Homemakers at Lindsey-Hopkins, contact:

Barbara Burkett, Educational Specialist
Alice Watkins, Coordinator, Vocational Education
Tom Coursey, Principal
Lindsey-Hopkins Technical Education Center
750 N.W. 20th Street
Miami, FL 33132
(305)-324-6070

or

Rosemary Minnis
Vocational Specialist
Dade County Public Schools 2A-6 Projects Manager
1450 N.E. 2nd Avenue, Room 825
Miami, FL 33132
(305)-376-1880

Appendix A

LINDSEY HOPKINS TECHNICAL EDUCATION CENTER

* * * * SINGLE PARENTING PROGRAM * * * *

INDIVIDUAL MONTHLY REFERRAL PROGRESS REPORT

STUDENT'S NAME _____ MONTH _____

COURSE TITLE _____ INSTRUCTOR _____

TIME (BUSINESS ED. ONLY) _____

Mark an "X" by the word or words that best describe items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

1. Regularity of Attendance
   - a. On time ☐
   - b. Occasional absences ☐
   - c. Irregular ☐

2. Personal Appearance
   - a. Acceptable ☐
   - b. Needs improvement ☐

3. Progress this Month
   - a. Accelerated ☐
   - b. Average ☐
   - c. Slow ☐
   - d. No progress ☐

4. Work Habits
   - a. Works independently ☐
   - b. Needs some assistance ☐
   - c. Needs much assistance ☐

5. Cooperation in Training
   - a. Cooperative ☐
   - b. Fairly cooperative ☐
   - c. Indifferent ☐
   - d. Uncooperative ☐

6. Difficulties (if any, check below and explain briefly in comment section).
   - a. Learning subject matter ☐
   - b. Following instructions ☐
   - c. Handling tools or machines ☐
   - d. Speed ☐
   - e. Accuracy ☐
   - f. General Health ☐

COMMENTS: _____

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Please forward the completed form to: Barbara Burkett, A236 or place in Single Parenting box located in Mail Room.